

Duxbury Clipper, Thursday, April 3, 1986

## **Powder Point Bridge Historical Data**

1887 By Chapter 301, Acts of 1887, the Massachusetts General Court incorporated a private company (Gurnet Bridge Company) to build Powder Point Bridge.

1892 Powder Point Bridge constructed -- also known as Gurnet Bridge, Long Bridge and The Half-Mile Bridge.

1904 By Chapter 378, Acts of 1904, ownership of the bridge was transferred to Plymouth County. The cost of maintaining the structure was established as follows: Plymouth County, 1/3; Town of Duxbury, 1/3; Other towns in county, 1/3.

1919 Duxbury Beach becomes available for sale. Beach purchased by 20 private citizens under a non-profit trust called the Duxbury Beach Assn. The association still owns the beach property today, including the section immediately off the east end of the Powder Point Bridge where parking is provided for Duxbury residents only (by permit sticker). To the north of this private parking area is a large public parking area where a parking fee is charged by the association. The 2 areas are normally separated by a gate.

1938 Conference held at the Plymouth County Commissioner's Office, attended by: Plymouth County Commissioners, Duxbury selectmen, Plymouth selectmen, Kingston selectmen, Marshfield selectmen, Plymouth County engineer and others. Pertinent items discussed: unrest over increasing repair costs and assessment to towns other than Duxbury; possible state takeover of the beach; need for access to Coast Guard Lighthouse at outer Duxbury Beach (Gurnet Point) and residences on Saquish Neck (all in Town of Plymouth); bridge access to private property only; numerous fires on the bridge; discontinuance of the bridge; maintain as a foot-bridge only; proposal by Duxbury selectmen to take over all responsibility for the bridge; appointment of 5-man committee to prepare recommendations.

1941 Bridge ownership transferred to Town of Duxbury (Chapter 379, Acts of 1939).

1975 A consultant (Raamot & Emerson) was hired to inspect the bridge and report on recommendations. Based on maintaining a 6-ton load limit, repairs to piles, pile caps, crossbracing and deck were estimated to cost \$200,000. Although it was determined that a minimum of 4 good piles per bent were required (at appropriate spacing), the capacity of existing piles was still unknown.

1977 As a result of the 1975 study, and possibly other input, a repair contract was issued. The bridge was repaired to maintain the 6-ton load limit and reopened in August 1977.

1985 Fire damage to bridge in June 1985. Damaged spans located approximately 200 feet east of boat channel. Bridge closed 5 weeks for repairs; reopened only to be closed again in 3 days (July 23, 1985) when serious structural defects (broken stringers) were found while repairing deck planks on a section of bridge not associated with the fire damage.

1985 MDPW divers inspect piles in area of fire damage (See Summary of Diver's Reports).

1985 MDPW District 7 Structures Maintenance Engineer recommends closing the bridge on July 23, 1985.